

## **Historic, archived document**

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.



In 3 HR.

# HOMEMAKERS' CHAT

FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY

U. S. DEPARTMENT  
OF AGRICULTURE  
OFFICE OF INFORMATION

Friday, January 19, 1945

Subject: "Continuous Inspection" Information from Office  
of Marketing Services. War Food Administration.

-oOo-

Government inspection of the processed food bought for the armed forces is not a new subject to most of you. When the war began the Government had to buy great quantities of canned, dried and frozen food. Like every homemaker the Government needed some way to determine the quality of the products. Fortunately, the Food Inspection Service had already been set up by the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

Food inspection of this kind had its beginning about 15 years ago when a large number of farmers didn't have the money to buy seed for the next year's crop. So that the packers would be sure to have food coming into the canneries the next summer they borrowed money from the banks to help their farmer-customers buy seed. Of course the banks had to have collateral for their loans, so the canners offered their seasonal pack of tomatoes or corn or whatever food they had canned. But the bankers asked, "How do we know that the food in those cans is all you claim to be?" Obviously, some impartial person, trained to judge the quality of canned goods, had to be employed to report on the canned food. The Department of Agriculture was called on to help.

That's the way processed food inspection started. In order to say that a certain can of corn or tomatoes passes the test and another can does not, certain definite standards were agreed upon by both the packers and the Government. Since that beginning they have cooperated in setting up standards for about 70 different products - canned, dried and frozen foods.

1-19-45



In 1939 one of the packers wanted to do even more. He didn't want to wait till his products were in the finished stage, ready for market, before they were examined. He wanted some one on the job all the time - from the minute the fresh produce was hauled up to the door of his cannery till it left in shiny tin cans. So he asked for a trained inspector from the Department of Agriculture to be in his plant throughout the canning season.

The experiment was so successful that 5 other plants asked for Government inspectors the following year. Since then many plants have wanted this service which is called 'Continuous Inspection'.

Although the Government trains the inspectors it's up to each canner to request and pay for this service. So many plants have wanted Government inspectors that all requests can't be filled. In the state of Texas now, 20 women are working in 9 different plants where citrus fruits alone are canned. And in Florida there are 15 citrus canneries, employing about 40 women inspectors. By the way, after the hurricane down there several months ago the canneries put in an SOS call to Washington asking for inspectors immediately. Much of the fruit could be saved if it were canned immediately, they said. So a number of inspectors made overnight flights to Florida to help save the citrus crop. And many of these inspectors will be on the job till the canning season closes - usually some time in March.

One of the first jobs an inspector does when she goes into a plant is to make sure that the sanitary conditions of the plant meet the rigid requirements of the "Continuous Inspection" service. Certain rooms must be screened against insects. The tables or moving belts where food is sorted must be well lighted. Women employees are required to wear hairnets, and if they handle food they wear rubber gloves. All employees must wear fresh uniforms each day.

But overseeing the clean housekeeping is only the beginning of an inspector's responsibility. Every hour she collects a sample of the food being processed.





In the canner's laboratory she examines it carefully. Orange juice for example is tested among other things, for its sugar and acid content. It must have the typical bright color of freshly-pressed juice - yellow-orange. A perfect color scores 20 points. If the juice is free from all defects such as skin, membrane, seeds, and pulp it gets 40 points. Flavor counts for another 40 points. It must have no traces of scorching, caramelization or oxidation - and it must have a fine, distinct, normal canned-orange-juice flavor.

Tests are not given by guess. Accurate instruments and chemical tests are used to determine the score. Even though tasting is a skill developed by thorough training, and not related to personal likes, the flavor is also checked by the high or low sugar and acid found. In summary, there are these steps in a continuous inspection job. First, the daily maintenance of a clean plant and equipment: Second, the continual tests of the product as it is being packed; third, comes the examination of the food after it is packed.

Samples are taken from the pack - about 1 to every 2,000 cans. The samples selected at random throughout the storage room in an effort to get a fair representation of the season's pack. All the tests mentioned before are given again - and in addition to these another test. It's concerned with the keeping qualities of the food. Canned goods for military use must be certain to keep well through rough travelling and a variety of climates.

Of course quite a few plants used "continuous inspection" for the first time when they processed food for the Army. But it's interesting to know that many canners find the service has so many advantages they plan to continue it after the war.

LIBRARY  
CURRENT SERIAL RECORD  
MAR 6 - 1945  
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE